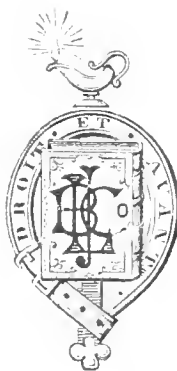


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JOHN ANDRÉ.



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JOHN ANDRÉ.

André, JOHN, an accomplished British officer, chiefly remembered for his connection with the treason of the colonial general, Benedict Arnold (q.v.), was born in London in 1751. His father was a merchant from Geneva, and his mother (*née* Girardot), though a native of London, was of French descent. Young André distinguished himself at the university of Geneva; but, on his father's death in 1769, he returned to London and assumed the management of the business. Finding mercantile pursuits irksome, however, he procured a commission, and in 1774 joined his regiment, the Royal Fusiliers, in Canada. He was captured at St John's by the colonial forces, was exchanged the following year, and became aid-de-camp successively to General Grey and Sir Henry Clinton, receiving from the latter (in 1780) the appointment of adjutant-general, with the rank of major.

During the occupancy of Philadelphia by the British army under General Howe in 1777-78, André was a welcome guest in the most aristocratic circles of that city, and was a recognised leader in their social festivities. He appears to have been particularly intimate in the family of Mr Edward Shippen, whose favourite daughter afterwards became the wife of General Benedict Arnold, and when in 1780 the latter obtained the command of West Point, André was selected by Clinton to

consummate the arrangements with Arnold for the betrayal of that post. A meeting between the conspirators was agreed upon, and on the night of September 20, 1780, Major André embarked on board the sloop of war *Vulture*, and proceeded to the rendezvous, some 35 miles up the Hudson, near the hamlet of Haverstraw. The place of meeting was on neutral ground in a thicket near the bank of the river, and thither at midnight, after remaining on board the sloop all day, André was conducted by a trusty friend of Arnold, one Joshua H. Smith, a resident of the vicinity, to whom the object of the meeting was known. Failing to finish their business during the night, they repaired in the morning to Smith's house, within the American lines, whence, at the termination of their interview, Arnold departed for his headquarters, having first furnished André with a pass through the American lines (as Mr John Anderson), and papers containing the plan for the surrender of West Point. The fatal mistake of accepting and retaining these papers on his person was in direct disobedience to Clinton's instructions. Concealing the papers in his stockings, André, accompanied by Smith and a negro servant, set out on his return to New York; but Smith, fearing to attempt to get him on board the *Vulture*, decided that the journey must be made by land. They crossed the Hudson at King's Ferry, spent the night within the American lines, and parted in the morning, Smith to return home, and André, mounted on a horse, to pursue his dangerous journey alone. As André neared the British lines, he was halted by an armed band. He declared himself a British officer on important business, and demanded permission to proceed.

To his consternation his captors (one of whom wore a Hessian coat) proved to be ardent partisans of the colonists, and although André finally produced the pass given him by Arnold, their suspicions were so thoroughly aroused that they conducted him back within the American lines and delivered him to the military authorities.

The papers found upon his person clearly established his character as a spy, and a military board convened by Washington declared that ‘agreeably to the laws and usages of nations he ought to suffer death.’ Washington approved the finding of the board, and André was sentenced to be hanged. At the earnest solicitation of the British commander, the execution was stayed for a day on the plea that the board ‘had not been rightly informed of all the circumstances;’ but at an informal meeting with the president of the board he failed to adduce any sufficient reason for a commutation of the sentence, and André was accordingly hanged at Tappan-town, 2d October 1780. He was buried near the place of execution. A monument to his memory was erected in Westminster Abbey by order of the king, and thither his remains were conveyed and deposited in 1821.

See Sargent, *Life of Major André* (1861); Lossing, *The Two Spies—Nathan Hale and John André* (1886).

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